1:Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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MALTA – GROUPING of LOCALITIES into CENSUS DISTRICTS

*195
103
634
659

LOCALITY	1842	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1948
VALLETTA				Valletta							
FLORIANA	Floriana District				District						
KOSPIKWA	Cottonera						East		Urban		
SENGLEA											
VITTORIOSA			District				District				
HAMRUN											
STA.VENNERA											
MARSA					Valletta						
SLIEMA	Third										
GŻIRA											
ST. JULIAN'S	District				District						
MSIDA											
PIETA									Suburban		
BIRKIRKARA							Central				
QORMI							District				
PAWLA	Fifth District						East				
TARXIEN											
ŻABBAR	Seventh District						District				
KALKARA											
MDINA											
RABAT	First District						West				
DINGLI							District				
MĠARR											
SIĠĠIEWI											
ŻEBBUG	Second District					Districts	Central				
MOSTA							West				
MELLIEHA	Fourth District						District				
ST.PAUL'S BAY											
NAXXAR											
GHARGHUR							Central				
LIJA											
ATTARD	Third District						District		Rural		
BALZAN											
LUQA	Fifth District										
ŻEJTUN											
MARSAXLOKK						Country					
BIRŻEBBUĠA											
GUDJA	Seventh District						East				
GHAXAQ											
ŻURRIEQ							District				
SAFI											
KIRKOP	Sixth District										
QRENDI											
MQABBA											

M.R/J.C.D. 1958

Fig. 36 Malta: Grouping of Localities into Census Districts.

[p. 134-C]

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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THE POPULATION AFTER 1842

Manuscripts of the unofficial census of 1828 are no longer extant and details of this enumeration are available only at second hand in Miège's '*Histoire de Malte*' published in 1840. The first regular Census of the Maltese Islands was taken in 1842 and the second in 1851, to be followed by decennial censuses until 1931. The war prevented any enumeration in 1941, and the eleventh Census took place in 1948.

Widespread illiteracy and the absence of penalties for non-compliance were obvious hindrances to accurate census-taking in nineteenth-century Malta. Thus the coverage of earlier censuses is unlikely to have been complete. The information asked for (Table 36) has also been an extremely variable quantity.

Table 36. Subjects covered in the censuses from 1861 to 1948.

Subject	Number of tables on each subject								
	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1948
Total Population			1	3	3	3	3	5	
Non-civilian Element			1	6	4	8	4		
Civilian Population									
Distribution and Increase	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	4
Ages	2	2	2	9	9	11	9	10	4
Marital Status	2	2	3	8	8	6	6	7	7
Occupations	2	2	3	5	5	4	4	4	33
Birthplace and Residence	2	2	7	10	10	9	9	10	11
Religion			2	2	2	1	1	1	
Housing of Families, Dwellings	2		2	5	4	4	4	5	16
Health and Vital Statistics	8	2	3	4	4	5	5	2	2
Asylums and Penal Institutions	1		6	4	4	4	4	3	
Maltese Abroad			1	1	1	1	1	1	
Miscellaneous	6[a]			10[b]	14[b]				16[c]
TOTAL Number of Tables[d]	19	4	30	80	83	67	61	62	98

a. Including four tables on the Judicial Courts.
b. All on Agriculture.
c. Including ten summary tables of all aspects.
d. This may not be the same as the total of the tables on each subject, since some tables cover more than one subject but have only been included under one heading.

The number of subjects dealt with has progressively increased, but few of the tabulations are strictly comparable for all censuses. In the nine censuses taken between 1861 and 1948, it is remarkable that not one tabulation has been preserved unchanged over the whole period. Apart from these variations in the scope of the census, there have been frequent changes in the number and grouping of the territorial units under which the figures are given (Fig. 36).

When considering population trends in the Maltese Islands, a good deal of confusion is also occasioned by the presence of a considerable non-Maltese element which produces fluctuations and changes in the pattern of population growth which are not characteristic of the Maltese people. This must always be borne in mind when considering the Census Reports which do not always make clear the distinction between the two groups.

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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Chapter IX

A. The Maltese Farmholding

For our purposes here we shall define a 'farmer' as 'the owner or holder of land which he cultivates', but will add the limiting clause, 'as the principal person of an agricultural enterprise'. There may be joint owners or holders but normally, even where a *'communio inter fratres'* has been established on the death of a parent landholder, one person will assume responsibility for the control of the enterprise. He is the farmer. His brothers, sisters, wife and children, if they assist in working the land, together with the non-family labour which he may employ are the farmworkers. The inter-relationships of family and work can, however, be much more complex than this simplification may imply. 423* 241 [464]

The land worked by the farmer and his group of helpers we shall term the 'farm holding' or 'farm'. 'Holding' here implies simply the land held by the farmer, and is not used in a synonomous sense with the legalistic 'tenement'. There are excellent reasons for maintaining a clear distinction between the two terms for, on the one hand, a holding may consist of many different tenements held by the farmer of as many landowners, and, on the other, a legal tenement may be occupied by more than one farmer. Confusion may also arise, in this connection, from the fact that a holding may contain freehold, as well as various types of leasehold land. Within each holding there exists a loosely-knit collection of plots, which, through accident or design, have come to be in the occupation of one individual or group. Because of the geographical isolation of the plots, most of the holdings might, descriptively, be termed 'fragmented holdings'. Such holdings need not necessarily have acquired this characteristic through the process of *parcellement*; that is by splitting up of a holding into a number of non-contiguous plots. No generic connotation, therefore, should be attached to the purely descriptive use of the term 'fragmented'. In the following examination of the Maltese farm, this distinction between descriptive statements and analyses of processes will be maintained. 423*

The physical size of a farm may be considered as the total area of land over which the farmer exercises sole rights of occupation for agricultural purposes. Fortunately, in the Maltese Islands, the matter is not complicated by problems of definition concerned with common land, as communal holding of land is effectively absent. But other problems do arise, since land is so variable in quality, ranging from fertile irrigated lands to soil-less karst, with many gradations in between. Most farms include land of more than one category and, especially in the north and west of Malta and the hard-rock areas of Gozo, many farmers hold rights over waste-land which from the cultivator's point of view is useless.

The average size of farms has proved an elusive statistic for many writers. A figure of 3.7 acres was given to the Royal Commission of 1911-12. From 1921-36 the Blue Books continued to advertise the patent fallacy that only 236 holdings were in the 0-10 acre size range and that 10,864 holdings contained from 11-50 acres of land. However, in this context any average figure is very largely meaningless except for purely comparative purposes. The range is enormous; holdings less than 1 *tomna* are not considered as farms, but there are many holdings only slightly larger than this, while at the other end of the scale, farms of 200 *tmien* are not unknown.

Much of the record concerning farm sizes is incomplete and, although the present response rate of over 97 per cent. to the annual Agricultural Census conducted by the Central Office of Statistics is excellent under the conditions prevailing in the Maltese Islands, it seems probable that earlier returns lagged far behind in this respect. Of the various sources, the Farm Register is probably the most accurate. It began with a Census in 1942 and was checked against another in 1944; for several years its details were consolidated by field survey. 423* 127 659

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 291]

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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and a small staff is still retained to endeavour to keep its material up to date.

Quite apart from the varying accuracy of the censuses (and it is almost impossible to assess the accuracy of the earlier ones), the analyst is faced with other internal problems. In connection with the size of farms and the types of land within them, different criteria have been used at different times: in 1891 and 1901, land was classed as cultivated and uncultivable; in the Farm Register, irrigated, semi-irrigated, dry- and tree-covered land are classed as cultivated and the balance as waste; the surveys of 1951-56 specify dry, irrigated and idle land, together with waste. How far these groups are comparable from period to period it is difficult to say. The 1956 Abstract provides a better picture, for here in addition to the analyses of dry and irrigated land considered separately, there is also a simple size analysis of holdings according to the amount of dry and irrigated land taken together. More closely comparable with the earlier analyses it is yet not identical, since wasteland and, presumably, idle land are omitted. The full significance of the size characteristics of Maltese farms emerges only when the relative proportions of the two classes of land, dry and irrigable, are studied. This material is presented later, in Table 38. However, useful preliminary points can be made on the basis of the earlier, simple size-range tabulations.

The size-range data are presented in Figs. 133 and 134 and relating to Malta and Gozo respectively; they are directly comparable except for the 1956 curve in the Gozo diagram which relates to cultivated land only. However it is unlikely that this discrepancy will seriously upset the validity of the diagram as a whole. A 1956 curve for Malta, based on similar figures, differs only in detail from that produced here for the period c. 1945.

The content of these diagrams is largely self-explanatory: each curve illustrating the number of holdings above or below certain critical size limits. In Malta, in the year 1891, almost 80 per cent. of all holdings were smaller than 40 *tmien*. Also in that year the median figure was 18 *tmien*.(5 acres) in Malta but 13 *tmien* (3¼ acres) in Gozo. Farms were already smaller in both islands by 1901 and, at the end of World War II, Maltese farms had become smaller than were the farms of Gozo 55 years earlier. In 1906, the median figure for Gozo stood at the very low level of 8 *tmien* (2¼ acres). When it is realised that, for all except Gozo 1956, these data include some 5-7 per cent. uncultivated land, a major problem in Maltese agriculture has been outlined.

It might be held that the decrease in the size of holdings simply reflects a general reduction in the farmed area as a result of urban expansion. However, later evidence will show that the process of *morcellement* has probably been continuous for at least 100 years, and it is uncertain whether, over this longer period, there has been a net increase or decrease in the area of agricultural land. Certainly, in the period 1850-80 large areas of wasteland, mainly Government Land, were let on long improvement leases. Although it is clear that some of this land, for various reasons, never became productive, and yet more has remained marginal in character, a quantity unknown has been permanently added to the cultivated area of the island.

However, from Figs. 133 and 134, it is clear that the reduction in the average size of the farm has taken place at all levels: large farms have become two or more smaller farms, while smaller farms have been reduced in size. The process is thus an integral part of local agricultural development: small farm units are not merely the product of external encroachment, which, by reducing the area of agricultural land also reduces the average farm size (assuming a constant farm population). The extension of non-agricultural uses is obviously a factor to be considered, but the total farm population has not remained constant; indeed, despite considerable emigration and movement to the towns, it has increased (Chapter VI A). The precise number of holdings at any one time is not readily ascertainable, as most records are known to be incomplete and there is no means of knowing how many farmers failed to make returns. However, the following Table 34 indicates the general trend:-

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

In the early years of its rule, Britain moved slowly but firmly to restrict the authority of the Church. As one of its first steps, it imposed a mortmain law which forced the Church to sell off bequests of immovable property within one year. In 1828, it abolished the right of sanctuary and restricted the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts to purely spiritual matters. Shortly afterwards, the Diocese of Malta, until then subject to the Metropolitan of Palermo, was made directly dependent on the Holy See.

In spite of the inroads Britain made on the power of the Church, the relations between the two have, on the whole, remained extremely cordial. This friendliness has been due very largely to the considerable protection which Britain has given to the Church in Malta. To begin with, it is protected from the competition of other religions. The missionary activities of groups such as the Bible Society and the Salvation Army have been severely restricted. Moreover, the government reserves the right to ban public religious ceremonies by non-Catholics if they threaten to disturb the peace. Catholic precepts regarding education and marriage are also safeguarded, for education is on Catholic religious principles, and divorce and civil marriage are not possible under Maltese law. Furthermore, the Archbishop is accorded high honour, and in the jealously guarded order of precedence he is second only to the Governor. Both the Archbishop and the Bishop of Gozo are exempt from the jurisdiction of the criminal courts.

In addition, the first Maltese elected government passed a law in 1922, declaring the Roman Catholic religion the religion of the country. Article 161 of the Malta Criminal Code makes it a criminal offence to vilify in public the Catholic religion or its ministers.[1]

Constitutional development in Malta has been a painful and slow process; for it is not a simple matter to give representative government to a fortress. The first constitution in 1835 provided for a council of government composed of five office holders, including the Governor and the Bishop, and three nominated dignitaries. Since then, there have been no less than nine different constitutions. Those promulgated before the First World War established an oligarchical system. Property restrictions on those allowed to vote and hold office resulted in elections by and for members of the landed, professional and merchant classes. Further-

[1] Act XVIII, 1933.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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notorious criminal whom the Nationalists hid until after the elections, was later convicted, the accusation jarred the solidly Catholic electorate and undoubtedly cost Strickland many votes.

In the years that followed this election, Malta was torn by an unprecedented political struggle between the Strickland Government and the Church. Since this dispute in many ways foreshadowed the present conflict between the Church and the Malta Labour Party, it is worth while to examine it in some detail.

While Strickland was the leader of the opposition, he made frequent attacks, both from the floor and through his newspapers, on the priests sitting in the Assembly. He maintained that the clergy should not take part in politics. In doing this he made many enemies, for his attacks were often bitter and insulting. For example, he once offered a cash prize to the person who gave him the best reason for having the Bishop of Gozo removed from office. On another occasion, he announced that for a small sum of money, even a horse could become a Papal Marquis.

Relations between Strickland and the Church, already strained, deteriorated rapidly after he became Prime Minister. When the two monsignori who represented the Archbishop in the Senate voted against his first budget, he considered that the Church had declared war on him. This was followed by a public demonstration against the Archbishop. At the same time, Strickland also launched a blistering attack through his newspapers on the two clerical Senators. Following this, there was a whole series of petty disputes which culminated in the famous Father Carta case.

Father Carta, a Sardinian monk, had been sent to Malta by the Superior General of the Franciscan Conventuals to resolve a disciplinary problem in one of the Order's Maltese convents. He soon discovered that a certain Maltese monk, Father Guido Micallef, was one of the principal trouble-makers, and arranged for his transfer to the Order's house in Liverpool. At this point Strickland intervened. He asserted that Father Micallef was being exiled because he had supported the Constitutional Party in the 1927 elections, and refused to issue the necessary exit permit. The Church was furious at this interference in what it regarded as its internal affairs. In the wrangle which followed, both the Governor and the Archbishop became involved, Father Micallef was expelled from the Order and defrocked, and the Cabinet asked the Governor to petition the Holy See to investigate the incident.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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659 A Papal Delegate visited Malta and concluded that the differences between the government and the Church could best be settled by means of a concordat. During most of the year following the Papal Delegate's visit, Britain tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a concordat and to get the Holy See to forbid the Maltese clergy to take part in the general elections scheduled for May 1930. The Vatican, however, declared that Strickland was not *persona grata* and that as long as he remained in power, a concordat was not possible.

In Malta, the relations between the Strickland Government and the Church went from bad to worse. In April 1930, two Constitutional Party Ministers gathered many sworn statements that Monsignor Gonzi, the Bishop of Gozo, had instructed priests to preach against the Constitutional Party and to refuse absolution to its supporters. This inquiry greatly angered the Church. On the 666 first of May, the Archbishop and the Bishop of Gozo issued a joint 659 pastoral which forbade people to vote for Strickland or those can- 648 didates who supported him. In view of the spiritual sanctions that [64] threatened people who voted for the candidates of one of the two [642] major parties, Britain had no option but to cancel the elections. It subsequently suspended the constitution, but kept the Strickland ministers on as advisers.

197 A Royal Commission went to Malta to investigate the trouble. Following its report, Britain restored the constitution and 64 abolished the teaching of Italian in primary schools. In June 1932 665 the Nationalists defeated Strickland and his supporters in a bit- 6'6 terly contested election in which 96 per cent of the electorate voted. However, their period in office was very brief. The Governor dismissed them in November 1933 for deliberately evading the constitutional provisions regarding language, for they had set about to re-establish the primacy of Italian in the educational system and the civil service. Once again the administration of the islands became the responsibility of the Governor.

186 During the fourteen years of Governor's rule which followed, 64 the deep wounds caused by the long, harsh political conflict slowly healed. The first Italian bombs of the war finally killed the language dispute. The united defence effort and the common suffering caused by the prolonged bombardment further helped to reunite political rivals and suppress parochial quarrels. Britain awarded the people of Malta and Gozo the George Cross for

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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their heroism, and after the war restored representative government.

In the first election under the new constitution, the people voted overwhelmingly for the Labour Party, then led by Dr. Paul Boffa. But in 1949 a disagreement between Dr. Boffa and his Minister of Public Works and Reconstruction, Mr. Dom Mintoff, split the party. The Nationalists, with the support of Dr. Boffa's new Workers' Party, formed the next few governments. Dom Mintoff's Malta Labour Party gradually swallowed the Workers' Party and finally defeated the Nationalists in the 1955 general election.

There was almost constant friction between the Church and the Mintoff Government during the three years it was in office. From the outset, Mintoff showed himself reluctant to submit to the authority of the Church. His refusal to pay the traditional call on the Archbishop, Monsignor Gonzi, when he took office was symbolic of this independence. Many incidents contributed to the disagreement between the two, which grew more intense as both became more outspoken in their criticism of each other. Perhaps the most serious clash occurred over the Archbishop's stand on the Government's proposal to link Malta more closely with Britain. On the eve of a referendum concerning this proposal, Monsignor Gonzi made a broadcast in which he said that he could not support the integration proposal because Mintoff had failed (whether by design or circumstance is an open question) to secure adequate guarantees from Britain to protect the position of the Roman Catholic religion. In spite of this, the electorate supported Mintoff's proposal; but relations between the Labour Party and the Archbishop remained strained.

Then, shortly before he resigned, Mintoff sparked off a sharp dispute with the Church by hanging in the National Museum a painting taken from St. John's Co-Cathedral. Originally, the government had sent the painting, a Caravaggio, to Italy to be restored. But the government seized it when it returned and declared that since the Co-Cathedral was government property, the painting was a national treasure that should be properly cared for and displayed to the public. In the course of the acrimonious dispute which followed, Mintoff, who had appealed the matter to the Vatican, was ordered by the Holy See to return the painting. He finally returned it on the night before he resigned.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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578 665 795 The relations between the Labour Party and the Church continued to deteriorate after the resignation; finally, in 1961, they gave way to open hostility. Both sides abused each other in the course of the election campaign. On 9th April the Church placed Mintoff and many of the Labour leaders under an interdict for their disrespect to the Bishop. A little over a month later, the Bishops issued a circular condemning the Labour papers. These sanctions intensified the conflict. Finally, just six weeks before the election, the Church, through the Diocesan Joint Council of Catholic Lay Associations, launched a massive campaign to persuade the people to vote against the Labour Party. The campaign was successful: the parties which the Church supported defeated the Labour Party at the polls, and the Nationalist Party took office.

578 659 665 795 The reader will have noted the similarity between the course of the conflicts of Strickland and Mintoff with the Church. Both took place after relatively long (for Malta) periods of representative government. Both involved a series of rather petty disputes which became progressively more bitter and divided the country. Both culminated in the Church imposing sanctions which ultimately led to the electoral defeat of its opponents. In each case, approximately one-third of the population chose to face Church sanctions rather than abandon its political leaders. Most of the actual incidents which provoked the disputes were quite out of proportion to the conflict they created. To my mind, these incidents were symptomatic of the inherent conflict between an elected government and a Church which has long exercised great authority in both secular and religious spheres.

It is not my intention to make a detailed analysis here of the complex causes underlying the present conflict between the Malta Labour Party and the Church. At this point it is sufficient to know that the dispute exists. In later chapters I shall be concerned with tracing its effects on the social organization of the villages. In the course of this study, it will also become apparent that there are conflicts between secular and religious interests in the villages which are quite unrelated to national political issues.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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in-nies il-kbar, 'the big heads'. But if asked, a person will often deny that such persons exist, and reply, 'Here we are all the same; we are all from the village'.

II

The authority of the State is represented by the police, who are formally responsible for law and order. Each village has a police station manned by a small contingent of constables under a sergeant. Several villages make up a police district under an inspector. In Malta most policemen live outside the villages in which they work. But it is usual for Gozitan constables stationed in Malta to be quartered in the police stations to which they are assigned.

In addition to their official duties of law enforcement, the police distribute voting certificates, help conduct censuses and give out the allotments of free food to old age pensioners and people on relief.[1] They also perform many favours for local residents. They help people fill out government forms, and occasionally allow the station telephone to be used for private calls. They are sometimes able to mediate in local disputes. Disputants very often report each other for insults, threats or some minor infraction of the law – throwing waste water and rubbish in the street is one of the most common – thus hoping to strangle their enemies in its due process. The police constable on duty is often able to reconcile the disputants and persuade them to withdraw the charges and counter-charges.

In general, the punitive role that the police are occasionally forced to play is offset by their role as distributors of government assistance and by their general helpfulness. District inspectors try to avoid personal relations with the people in their districts since they must prosecute all criminal cases, and personal ties might prove awkward. Sergeants and constables, on the other hand, normally maintain friendly social contact with the local inhabitants. They are often invited for drinks during feasts and weddings, and quite a number marry local girls. The Maltese police thus play

[1] The government has distributed surplus U.S. agricultural products to different groups of needy people since 1956. This food was first secured through the Co-operative for American Relief to Everywhere, Inc. (C.A.R.E., Inc.) and more recently through the Catholic Relief Services of America. The Department of Emigration, Labour and Social Welfare, not the police, selects the beneficiaries.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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at the village level. While there are Labour committees in almost all villages in Malta, not all of them have been successful in finding club premises. Where clubs have not been opened, the active members usually meet in a café or a private house.

The role of the Labour committee or club in the social life of a village is rather complex. The Labour club at all times is the centre of the local Labour supporters. During the past few years it has also been the centre of agitation against the established authority of the Church, especially in so far as it touches on secular matters. During the three years following 1955 when the Labour Government was in office, these village committees were backed by the government. Committee members thus wielded considerable power, for they provided a direct link with the established authority of the State at the national level. The same was true, but to a lesser extent, of the agents of the Nationalist Party during its period in government.

V

The qualities which the Maltese themselves consider important for a person to have in order to hold office are, of course, ideal ones. As such, they may not all be present in the same person. The leader of the St. Roque Band Club in Farrug summed these up for me as responsibility, willingness to work, courage and social status (*pożizzjoni*). Responsibility and willingness to work are self-explanatory.

Courage is a necessary quality since any person in a position to exercise some control over the action of others (especially in a society which stresses equality) is bound to be criticized by those over whom he exercises it, as well as by those who envy his position. Courage may be based on a desire to acquire power, and insensitivity to or failure to perceive criticism, or on an idealism which places the ultimate ends above the criticism of the means employed to attain them. I have known various village leaders whose courage was based upon one or more of these attributes. I have also met people who resigned from their offices because their motivation or insensitivity was not sufficiently strong to prompt them to carry on in spite of criticism. A former secretary of the social club in Kortin once summed up the reasons for his resignation with the proverb, 'Unfortunate is the one who gets

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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[p. 55]

CHAPTER V

The Church and Village Politics

Most Maltese regulate their lives by the daily and monthly cycle of religious activities. The major divisions of the day are rung from the bells of the village church. They first ring the Paternoster half an hour before the first Mass. Then the Angelus bell rings a call to prayer at eight in the morning, at noon and at sunset. The final bell of the day is rung two or three hours after sunset, and is a brief request for the living to remember the dead in their prayers. The call of the Angelus is observed by many. When it is rung, work and conversation stop whether in a government office or a village café, men remove their hats, and someone among them leads them in a short prayer. In Gozo I have seen a busy square become suddenly silent and many people kneel in the street as the Ave Maria was rung at sunset. People also often kneel in the streets when the bells announce the elevation of the Host during a sung Mass, and during Benediction in the evening. And finally, late in the evening, clusters of relatives and neighbours can be seen sitting in their open doorways reciting the Rosary together before they go to bed.

Most girls and women and many boys and men attend one of the three or four daily Masses which are offered in all parish churches between four and seven in the morning. Virtually every one in the village attends one of the five or six Masses offered on Sundays. The few who do not attend are known to the village, and are the subject of gossip and other social pressure. Since the recent dispute between the MLP and the Church, however, their numbers are increasing.

As the church bells mark the important hours of the day, so the principal divisions of the year are set out by the annual national and parochial religious feasts and processions. Besides being major religious occasions, they are eagerly looked forward to as recreational events. Though secular spectacles, such as political rallies, the government-run Carnival procession and, above all, the

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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none of these things. This study of village politics has thus been largely concerned with parish politics. In this field the Church is the arbiter of all issues of policy. It is therefore the authority that hands down decisions on matters which concern the community; it is also the authority against which disappointed petitioners rebel.

II

At the national level, the picture is similar. Since the Church for so long has represented the interests of a solidly Catholic people *vis-à-vis* the State, it has always exercised considerable influence, if not authority, in matters of national policy. Hence some groups have often disagreed with its decisions. Both during the late 'twenties and early 'thirties and more recently, political parties have rebelled against its authority. Their rebellions have given rise to conflicts that have divided the country.

Though the Maltese do not regard this conflict as permanent, it would seem from its recurrence during Malta's only two periods of sustained representative government that it is, in fact, inherent in the social system. That is, it has followed almost inevitably upon the introduction of elected government into a society linked as closely with the Church as Malta is. Issues of national policy, which in countries where the Church is not such an integral part of society would be regarded as purely political and devoid of religious content, in Malta become matters on which the Church feels obliged to make known its views. Disputes arise when the views of a political party differ from those held by the Church. The party then accuses the Church of interfering in politics, and is in turn charged by the Church with being anti-clerical. Political issues become religious ones, or, seen from another point of view, religious ones become political. But in the dispute which follows, people from all walks of life are forced to make a choice between Church and political party. The resulting conflict divides the islands into bitterly opposed factions.

The persistence of this conflict, of course, is partly dependent upon the continuing survival of a political party at variance with the Church. In the past this was Strickland's Constitutional Party; at present it is the Malta Labour Party; in the future it may be yet another. The conflict which divided the country thirty years ago diminished after Strickland made peace with the Church; it

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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disappeared when the old Constitutional Party died out in the long period of Governor's rule and the war that followed. At present, however, the MLP shows no signs of weakening. On the contrary, it is as tightly united and strong today as it has ever been. Thus this conflict will in all probability continue to divide Malta and Gozo in the foreseeable future, though its intensity may fluctuate.

It is well to remember that this study was carried out at a time when the hostility between these two camps was at its peak. Some of the examples that have been given, therefore, are extreme cases which would have been quite inconceivable even ten years ago. It is also possible that ten years hence they will appear equally strange. But this does not detract from the relevance of the analysis, for if the examples given are ephemeral, the principles which they illustrate are permanent.

III

In many respects the rebellion of a political party against the authority of the Bishop is similar to that of a festa partit against its parish priest. There is an important difference, however; the festa partit can appeal an unfavourable decision of its parish priest to the Archbishop. If the latter rules against the partit, it can bring pressure to bear that may result in the transfer of the parish priest. A political party, on the other hand, cannot appeal the unfavourable decisions of the Bishop to any local authority, for in his diocese his word is law. Though in theory such disputes can be referred to the Holy See, in practice, as in the case of Strickland's conflict with the Church, they fester for so long that by the time Rome is brought in reconciliation is difficult, if not impossible. If in practice a political party cannot appeal to a higher authority, it can even less agitate for the replacement of the Bishop. Thus disputes remain unresolved and the supporters of the political party become progressively more anti-clerical. Finally, their anti-clericalism is equated with anti-Catholicism, and their rebellion against authority with revolt against the social order.

But is it in fact a revolution? It is important to draw a clear distinction between rebellion and revolution.[1] In the case of the former, people may turn against a leader personally, and may

[1] Cf. Max Gluckman, *Custom and Conflict in Africa* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1959), p. 28.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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even try to remove him from office. But they do not attack the office itself. In contrast, a revolution aims at changing not only the office-holder, but also the nature of the office and the social order in which it functions. Though the Malta Labour Party has strongly criticized the Archbishop and the clergy, often in insulting language, for their refusal to endorse its integration scheme, and, later, its demands for independence, it has never suggested that the office of archbishop should be abolished or the Church suppressed. The Church, however, attacks Mintoff as though he were bent on overthrowing the established social order in general, and the Catholic Church in particular. The extremely severe sanctions that it has directed against the MLP and its leaders reflect this point of view.

There is a very real danger that this strong medicine may kill the patient, for there is evidence that the MLP's anti-clericalism is in fact becoming anti-Catholicism, and the rebellion a revolt against the Church. Some of the more extreme, educated Labour supporters are showing a growing interest in the ideologies of countries which have fought successful battles against the Church. Though the great majority of the Labour supporters would still like to be devout Catholics, a small but increasing number are beginning to question the social order. As one remarked to me, 'I'm regarded as a Communist by my neighbours and the Church, which denies me its sacraments. Have I anything to lose by becoming one?' Though Communist literature rarely finds its way into Malta, since it is illegal to send it in the mails, a number of persons have begun to listen regularly to Radio Moscow. A few are even discussing the possibility of joining another church.

IV

But in spite of this bitter conflict, Maltese villages are still tightly united communities, life goes on and the social order does not disintegrate. Considering everything, there has been relatively little open violence between the supporters of the Church and the Labour Party. If occasionally there was some, it was most often caused by or directed against outsiders, either those who married into the villages, or who were imported for some special occasion from other villages. The battle between the Gozitans and the Maltese Labour supporters was an extreme case of this kind. But

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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000 states. Alone with Gibraltar it runs a Lotto (with weekly
•659 drawings) as a Government Department. Until 1866 Malta's
525 Opera House was the Manoel Theatre, a little gem of a play-
368 house built as the Court Theatre by Grand Master Manoel
de Vilhena in 1731 and believed to be the oldest theatre in
368 Europe. It is easy enough to appreciate how daintily graceful
545 it must have looked when the audience, arrayed in the
brocades and perukes of the eighteenth century, was
assembled to witness some comedy of Molière or Goldoni.
Later used as a cinema, it is now being scientifically restored
to its original form and purpose.

368 In 1866 the new Opera House, officially called the Theatre
Royal, was completed at a cost of £60,000 just within
Kingsgate, partly on the site of a dilapidated old bakery which
has been identified with the house of the Turcopilier, title
of the Pillar or Head of the Langue of England. In 1873
this building, which was designed by Barry, the architect of
the Covent Garden Theatre, in a style which while dignified
was entirely out of harmony with Valetta's prevailing archi-
tectural character, was seriously damaged by fire and was
reconstructed at a farther cost of £20,000. Before its
destruction in the Second World War it was the only theatre
known to the writer where it was the rule for male members
of the audience to attend the evening performances either in
mess dress or in evening dress with decorations.

655 The Monte di Pietà, the Government pawnbroking
175 Department, was established at the end of the sixteenth
century and was housed in its present handsome office in
Merchants' Street by Ximenes, the last but two of Malta's
Grand Masters. Connected with the Monte di Pietà is an
institution known as the Monte di Redenzione. In wander-
ing about the island the visitor will occasionally encounter
a building of the seventeenth or eighteenth century adorned
with a shield representing three cones surmounted by the
letter "R". These buildings constitute the property, now
administered by the Government of Malta under a trust, of

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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If the Church in Malta thus lost its right of granting asylum, its Head acquired at an even earlier stage of the British occupation another right which is carefully preserved to the present day. In 1801 Major-General Pigot, then in charge of the administration and in command of the troops, issued the following Standing Order to the "Garrison of La Valette and its Dependencies":

> His Eminence the Bishop of Malta is to receive from all guards honour due to a Brigadeer [*sic*] General.

When, after the First World War, the rank of Brigadier-General was abolished, the Archbishop of Malta was promoted, from the point of view of military compliments, to be a Major-General; and the guard never fails to turn out to him every day that he crosses the Palace Square.

It is sometimes said that the privilege was granted in recognition of the military services of Bishop Francis Xavier Caruana, who as Canon Caruana played a leading rôle in the rising against the French in 1798–1800. But this story is picturesque rather than probable, seeing that the salute to the Bishop was ordered in 1801 and Canon Caruana did not become Bishop of Malta until thirty years later. Its origin lay no doubt in the wish of the Occupying Power to demonstrate in a public manner its respect for the Church of Malta and its Head.

For the Roman Catholic Church is in Malta by law established; its canon law is, as in Quebec, the law of the land. It follows that contact between Church and State is close, and this contact is not confined, on the part of the representatives of the State, to relations with the hierarchy but is maintained equally with the parish clergy. The link finds its formal and public expression on the 2nd February of each year, the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the ceremony of Candlemas, the "Candelora." On the morning of this day all the parish priests, wearing their best cassocks, repair to the Palace in Valetta, and one

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

795 by one, as the names of their parishes are called out, advance
659 to the Governor's throne and present to him a large and
796 heavy wax candle, generally embellished with painted decorations.

This Candlemas ceremony has been maintained uninterruptedly from the days when the State was the Order of S. John; and the Governor takes this occasion, as did his predecessors the Grand Masters, to address the assembly on the problems of the day, with particular emphasis on the manner in which Church and State can best co-operate for the benefit of the people. It gives the Governor of Malta the same sort of opportunity, *mutatis mutandis*, to make public pronouncements on matters of policy as the British Prime Minister is given at the Lord Mayor's Banquet. A collation brings this happy and useful function to a close.

Here it may be added that the Governor retains, as the successor of the Grand Masters, certain ecclesiastical patronage, such as the nomination to the post of Dean of the Cathedral Chapter of Malta and the right of presentation to various benefices. A survival of another sort from the days of the Knights is the religious corporation known as the Collegiate Church of S. Paul's Grotto at Rabat, whose Canons still wear at their ceremonies the habit, *stolone* and cross of the Order.

241' The principal industry of the Maltese islands is agriculture,
433 and the Maltese, despite the stony nature of their land, are skilful and industrious farmers with a wonderful knack of extracting the utmost from the soil, despite methods necessarily somewhat primitive since their fields are too small for modern agricultural machinery. Maltese potatoes and Maltese oranges have a high reputation. Vegetables are good, especially tomatoes; wheat does well where there
[439] is room to grow it. But the islands can produce only a fraction of their annual consumption of cereals, and much
251 has therefore to be imported from outside. Among the most
178 familiar features surviving from the era of the Knights are

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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668 of July 1955, to avoid unemployment, the representatives of the Maltese people, in Parliament assembled, declare themselves absolved from their pacts and obligations towards the British Government, and from those so far assumed towards the Allies of that Government—this position to obtain for so long as the British Government fails to guarantee that the number of persons employed by the said Government in Malta shall not decrease before there is "alternative employment" for those discharged.

On this inauspicious note ended the year 1957 despite the patient efforts of the Government in London and of Sir Robert Laycock and his advisers in Malta to bring the protracted and often vexatious negotiations to a happy issue. The latter's task thereafter was made no easier by a Circular issued in February 1958 to Heads of Departments and all other Malta Government employees forbidding them on pain of disciplinary action "to make any verbal or personal contacts on any official matter with any member of the other side of the Diarchy" without the personal permission of the Minister concerned. In April these words were extended to cover "any official matter *or otherwise*." Thereby was created the anomalous situation that the islands' officials subordinate to the Mintoff Administration had to boycott those of the Maltese Imperial Government not only officially but socially, even to the extent of declining the Governor's invitations to dinner. Be it added that the embargo was far from being universally observed, while Ministers continued to seek direct personal contacts with the Imperial side of the Diarchy whenever it suited them to do so.

3

643 In 1608 one of the greatest and most innovating painters of the Seicento, that Michaelangelo Amerighi who was better known from his birthplace as Caravaggio, spent some months of his short and disordered life in Malta, employed

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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by the splendid, vigorous and art-loving Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt. Notwithstanding the Grand Master's generous protection the 38-year-old artist soon made Malta too hot to hold him. He was put in prison, escaped and died in Italy within a year or so. But in the meantime Malta and the world had become the richer by two pictures which he painted for S. John's Conventual Church in Valetta, the great Beheading of S. John the Baptist and the smaller S. Jerome. In 1956 these pictures, which had never before left the walls for which they were painted except to be put in a place of safety during the Second World War, were sent to Italy in a British man-of-war for restoration and for display at the Exhibition of seventeenth-century art held in Rome during the winter of 1956–57. Of this Exhibition, indeed, the larger picture provided the central attraction.

At the close of the Exhibition the pictures were brought back to Malta, again in one of Her Majesty's ships, but to the general astonishment were forcibly impounded on arrival by the Maltese Government on Mr Mintoff's orders without previous notice and conveyed to the Museum despite vigorous protests from the ecclesiastical authorities. The Mintoff Government had clashed with the Church on other matters but there had been no inkling that its unpredictable leader had ever contemplated the transfer of these pictures to civil custody or the use of unilateral high-handed action to bring it about.

The state of tension with the Church created by this and other subjects of disagreement persisted for another year, that is to say until April 1958, by which time Mr Mintoff, now ready to break with the British Government, decided to clear the decks by making his peace with the Archbishop. As abruptly as he had seized the Caravaggios did he return them to S. John's, at the oddly chosen time of 1 A.M. on Sunday, the 20th April. On the following day statements were issued from the Archbishop's Palace and the Prime Minister's office declaring that good relations between the Government and the Church had been restored.